

Two papers on the Notin Affair

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Historical News and Comment

The Notin Affair

Bernard Notin, forty years old, married with five children, senior lecturer at the University of Lyon-III (titled Jean Moulin) was denounced in the newspaper *Le Monde* January 28-29, 1990, p. 9) by Edwy Plenel for an article published in the review *Economies et Sociétés* (no. 32 of a review published by Presses Universitaires de Grenoble with financial support from the CNRS [Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique], August 1989 [printed December 1989], pp. 117-133). Notin's article was condemned as racist, anti-Semitic, and Revisionist by the journalist. In particular the article contained the following passage on the gas chambers:

The real passes in judgement before the unreal. The historical theme of the homicidal gas chambers is quite revealing of this process. The proofs offered to demonstrate their existence evolved according to circumstances of time and place, but issued forth from a Pandora's box having three drawers: at the bottom, the visit to the site (slightly credible); in the middle, the assertion of the victors (= the gas chambers existed); on top, rumor (story of the man who saw the man who saw the man who ...). The existence [of the gas chambers] has been postulated *in toto*, no matter the reality of this reality.

Here one will recognize the origin of every tyranny.

The review's editor-in-chief, Gérard Destanne de Bernis, also denounced the article, declaring, "In my opinion some kind of ban is necessary"; the administration of the ISMEA (Institut des Sciences Mathématiques et Economiques Appliquées) similarly denounced Notin's piece. On the other hand, Frédéric Poulon, professor at the University of Bordeaux-I, responsible for editing the issue in question, declared:

I regret this affair profoundly. But there is a serious question of freedom of expression. I am not dissociating myself from Bernard Notin.

A petition against Bernard Notin, originating from readers employed at the Bank of France, is circulating at all the universities. Antoine d'Antume, professor of economics at the University of Paris-I, deplored that a scientific journal gave echo to theses that are completely unscientific. Oliver Favereau, professor of economics at the University of Paris X-Nanterre, declared:

... the Faurissonians are looking for academic recognition. They want to legitimize We notion that these are issues which scholars debate. That this article was published in a university context is a grave matter.

Frédéric Poulon has been "put on the shelf" and his seminar suspended. The MRAP (Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Nations) made a criminal complaint, specifying that "this decision was taken at the request of Gérard Destanne de Bernis, editor-in-chief of the review and member of the Movement." Destanne de Bernis has asked libraries cease lending the offending issue of *Economies et Sociétés* to readers and to tear out Bernard Notin's article. The University Press of Grenoble is working on a new printing of the issue which omits the article under attack; it will be replaced by a page explaining the scandal.

Notin's class was disrupted by young Jews. They were accompanied by two former concentration camp inmates and Jewish notables from Lyon, including Dr. Marc Aron, who had organized demonstrations against Professor Faurisson in 1978-79. Cameras filmed the incident. Notin was held against his will and insulted. He remained silent.

Michel Noir, mayor of Lyon, condemned the senior lecturer and declared that, for his part, he could not remain indifferent to the idea of falsification of history as a "Lyon specialty," alluding to the Faurisson affair in 1978-79, the Roques affair of 1985 (two members of the jury which graded his thesis, Father Pierre Zind and Jean-Paul Allard, were from Lyon) and to certain student newspapers and pamphlets on the Barbie trial in 1987.

It was discovered that Bernard Notin was a member of the scientific advisory council of the National Front.

François Kourilsky, director general of the CNRS, decided to discontinue CNRS's support for the *Economies et Sociétés*.

In a letter to *Le Monde*, Madeleine Rebérioux, professor of history at the University of Paris-VIII and vice-president of the League for the Rights of Man, condemned the increasing support for the National Front in the universities.

Bernard Notin has maintained his calm. He protested the disruption of his class. Notin makes clear that, for him:

It has never been a question of denying the sufferings of the Jews and many others during the Second World War. Neither the events of the past nor the occurrences of the present, however, can be safe from debate and criticism in the reviews provided for that.

The Union of French Jewish Students demanded that Notin be "expunged from the faculty."

The administration, then the administrative council, of the University of Lyon-III condemned Notin's Revisionist stance. the council of the faculty of law (under which Notin's course comes), declared that:

... respecting completely liberty of expression inherent in the university, [the council] is all the more comfortable in condemning his deviations, which are conducive to racism and to Revisionism and, in the case in point, the content of an article which was inspired by this miserable ideology.

Notin's courses were cancelled by Laurent Boyer, dean of the faculty of law: the financial penalty thus approaches 30,000 francs a year [over \$5,500 U.S. as this issue went to press].

Pierre Vialle, president of the University of Lyon-III, informed Bernard Notin that he did not intend to lodge a complaint against the Jewish demonstrators. In a communique he expressed the university administration's consternation and his "condemnation of the Revisionist theses and of racism."

Bernard Notin has decided not to compete for his *agrégation* [the highest teaching diploma in France] in economics. He has been forced to submit his resignation to the scientific council of his university, on which he represented the IAE (Institut d'Administratiffon des Enterprises). His resignation was necessary so that the city of Lyon could resume seating one of its representatives on the administrative council of the IAE. The municipal council has appointed attorney Alain Jakubowicz, assistant delegate for the rights of man and one of the lawyers for the civil parties to the Barbie trial in 1987.

The rabbi of Lyon gave a discreet promise that, if Notin withdrew his complaint against the Jewish agitators who briefly took him prisoner, they would refrain from further demonstrations. The rector allowed this group to rent the large amphitheater shared by the Universities of Lyon-II and Lyon-III for an exhibit devoted to the *Shoah*.

Bernard Notin has received support from colleagues across France. As for his financial situation, he is up against the MRAP by himself and must bear the considerable expense of a litigation which requires two lawyers, one in Lyon and one in Paris.

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This article is a translation of the French original, which appeared in *Revue d'Histoire Révisionniste* (No. 1, May-June- July 1990). Translated in *The Journal of Historical Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, p. 367-370.

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The Notin Affair: Jewish Organizations Make the Law

Since 1990, Bernard Notin, assistant professor of economics at the University of Lyon III, has been unable to practice his profession -- in spite of French law -- because of a decision by the Jewish institutions and organizations of Lyon represented by Dr. Marc Aron, (1) as well as the Union of Jewish Students of France (Union des Etudiants Juifs de France: UEJF).

No one protests this anomaly: neither Bernard Notin's colleagues, the president of his university, the national Minister of Education, the human rights organization Ligue des droits de l'homme, nor the major media. They remain silent, either because they approve this excessive display of power, or because they know these organizations are capable of unleashing at will a ruinous witch-hunt against heretics.

On June 7, 1994, the national daily newspaper Le Monde felt it necessary to announce that Notin was being hired to teach at the Mohammed I University in Oujda, Morocco, at the request of the Dean of the Faculty of Economics. The UEJF responded by bringing such pressure to bear internationally that within 48 hours the Moroccan university made it known it was not planning to hire Notin.

From the outset, Le Monde has been implacable toward Notin. Notably, it served as a mouthpiece for his persecutors with a January 28-29, 1990, item by Edwy Plenel entitled "Un article jugé raciste et révisionniste suscite des protestations" ("An article judged racist and revisionist incites protests").

Notin's thought crime was to have authored an iconoclastic study on the role of the French media. It appeared in a specialized journal with a restricted circulation that is published with the approval of the prestigious Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), the National Center for Scientific Research. (Economies et sociétés, No. 8/ 1989 [Dec. 1989], University Press of Grenoble, pp. 117-133).

In passing, the author brought up the media's treatment of the subject of homicidal gas chambers, letting it be known that he is skeptical of the existence of these chemical slaughterhouses, and citing as his reference the 1980 revisionist book by Serge Thion, *Vérité historique ou vérité politique?* ("Historical truth or political truth?").(2)

Thus began the campaign against this 39-year-old scholar (and sole breadwinner for a family with five small children) -- a campaign that eventually would surpass in vehemence and duration anything seen thus far along these lines. Because this story has already been covered in the French journal *Revue d'histoire révisionniste*, I shall not deal further with it here.(3)

On July 11, 1990, a Paris court sentenced Notin, on the basis of Article 1382 (on damages) to pay 25,000 francs (about \$5,000) in damages to the "Movement Against Racism and For Friendship Among Peoples" (Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples: MRAP). The judgment was upheld by a decision on May 15, 1991. On appeal, the sentence was raised to 29,000 francs.

On the administrative level, the National Council for Higher Education and Research (Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche: CNESER) also decided to impose penalties, although this matter is currently pending before the Council of State.

Bernard Notin tried to resume his work as a assistant professor, but Jewish organizations acted to prevent it. Each year, without fail, he writes to the president of his university formally to request a teaching assignment, along with a timetable. He receives no answer to his letters.

On February 3, 1993, he was persuaded to sign a news release that amounted to a solemn public recantation. In the text, after protesting against what had been done to him ("One intends anew, illegally, and through coercion, to forbid me to teach and to exercise the profession for which the taxpayers are paying me"), he declared that he was not questioning the genocide of the Jews nor the Nazi gas chambers. He added that his purpose had never been to "rewrite history improperly," and concluded notably: "If I have caused, involuntarily, the least suffering to anyone, I ask their forgiveness."

All for nothing: the ban continues to this day.

Bernard Notin's final lecture was on May 2, 1990. For more than six years, the predicament of this scholar, who is now 45 years old, has constituted an anomaly in both law and reason.

The Jewish organizations know quite well that no law authorizes them to impose such penalties on anyone. In showing their readiness to pressure an employer -- even a government institution -- to prevent an employee from practicing his profession, these organizations pose a threat to the livelihood of everyone who is not self-employed or independently wealthy. As for the nation's education administrators, they know that every civil servant has the right, in the exercise of his duties, to government protection.

Jewish institutions and organizations, mouthpieces for the Jewish community, enjoy special privileges in France. The Notin affair demonstrates that they are in a position to dictate their own laws to the state. I do not know of any other institution, any other organization, or any other community in France capable of conducting a campaign of this kind, of persecuting a man with this ferocity, of pursuing him even in exile, and all this, if not with general approval, at least without a word of protest.(4)

In France people say that "the Jews are like everyone else." In view of the Notin affair, I personally have difficulty believing it.

-- June 18, 1996

Notes

1/ More than anyone else, Marc Aron bears responsibility for the hardships endured by Bernard Notin for more than six years, as well as for my own travails over the past 17 years. [Editor's note: The ban against Notin is still in force in August 1997.] During the late 1970s, Dr. Aron headed the joint committee of the Jewish institutions and organizations of Lyon. An eminent member of the exclusively Jewish lodge of B'nai B'rith, he also headed the European section of the World Jewish Congress. For his role during the early 1990s, see: Emmanuel Ratier, *Mystères et secrets du B'nai B'rith, la plus importante organisation juive internationale* (Facta, 1993), pp. 284-287.

2/ See: S. Thion, "A French Scholar Responds to a Widely Acclaimed Anti-Revisionist Work About Auschwitz," July-August 1994 *Journal of Historical Review*, pp. 28-39.

3/ See, in particular, *Revue d'histoire révisionniste*, No. 1, pp. 143-146; No. 2, pp. 155-162; No. 3, p. 206.

4/ See: "Jewish Militants: Fifteen Years, and More, of Terrorism in France," *The Journal of Historical Review*, March-April 1996, pp. 3-13.

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